AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Page 1, after the title, please insert the following heading and paragraph:

--PRIORITY CLAIM

This is a U.S. national stage of application No. PCT/CH2003/000388, filed on June 16, 2003. Priority is claimed on that application and on the following application:

Country: Switzerland, Application No. 1110/02, Filed: June 27, 2002.--

Please replace the paragraph and heading beginning at page 1, line 4 to page 1, line 9, with the following rewritten paragraph:

Technical Field

The invention relates to a stacking device for strip segments, especially for textile strip segments provided with end folds~~, as defined in the preamble to patent claim 1~~. Such strip segments are, in particular, textile labels.

Please replace the paragraph and heading beginning at page 1, line 11 to page 2, line 4, with the following rewritten paragraph:

Prior Art

Stacking devices of the type stated in the introduction are already known, such as, for example, from US-A-3 846 960. There, the strip segments are deposited in a stacking shaft. To this end, the labels are initially deposited on opposing hold-down devices and then pressed into the stacking shaft by means of press-down devices when the hold-down devices are withdrawn. The hold-down devices are then extended again prior to the withdrawal of the press-down devices into the starting position. Disposed in the stacking shaft is a shaft floor, connected by friction engagement with a guide. As the build-up of the stack progresses, the shaft floor is also retired. This is done with the aid of the press-down devices whenever the compressive force of the press-down devices surmounts the friction force of the frictional engagement between the shaft floor and the guide. The end folds of the strip segments have the tendency to return to the original

stretched position and thereby generate a spreading force which is very detrimental to the stacking operation, since the stack of strip segments acts as an elastic mass which can only be compressed with difficulty by the press-down devices and tends to expand. This also results, in particular, in the free portions of the strip segments between the hold-down devices bulging upward and jeopardizing perfect stack formation. The removal of the thus compressed stack contained the risk of the stack ~~of the~~ falling apart if the shaft floor is not further retired by the time the stack is relieved of pressure. This must possibly be done manually, which is awkward.

Please delete the paragraph beginning at page 2, line 10 to page 2, line 11.

Please delete the paragraph beginning at page 3, line 1 to page 3, line 2.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 3, line 5 to page 3, line 9, with the following rewritten paragraph:

The stacking shaft can be assigned to strip segments of specific size. ~~A configuration as claimed in claim 2 is~~ In an advantageous embodiment, however, ~~in which~~ the side walls [[is]] are adjustable to the length of the strip segments to be stacked.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 3, line 11 to page 3, line 32, with the following rewritten paragraph:

For the transportability of the shaft floor, various configuration options present themselves. For instance, the shaft floor can be transported by a drive mechanism for its [[back]] backside. Particularly advantageous, however, is an embodiment ~~as claimed in claim 3,~~ in which the shaft floor is assigned a slide which is movably disposed on a side wall. According to ~~claim 4~~ another embodiment, this slide can have a dedicated drive. More advantageous is an embodiment ~~as claimed in claim 5,~~ using a linear gear. Such as linear gear may, for example, be a spindle or a chain drive. Particular preference is for a rotary toothed belt. The arrangement of

the drive mechanism on a side wall produces high flexibility for the stacking shaft, since the drive mechanism is then displaceable with the side wall. A configuration ~~as claimed in claim 6~~ is also advantageous in which a guide is disposed on the slide. The guide extends over the maximum width of the stacking shaft and preferably has two guide rods on which supports for floor parts of the shaft floor are displaceably disposed. The supports are adjusted in terms of their mutual spacing. This enables the slide and/or the configuration of the shaft floor to be adjusted to a variable width of the stacking shaft and hence to a corresponding length of strip segments. To this end, it is expedient if, according to ~~claim 7~~ a further embodiment, the supporting facing away from the slide is designed as a connecting member displaceable on the assigned side wall.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 3, line 34 to page 3, line 39, with the following rewritten paragraph:

The flexibility of the stacking shaft can be improved if the side walls ~~according to claim 8~~ have on the back rear wall strips, thereby not only simplifying the mutual adjustability of the side walls, but also additionally improving the support of the stack of strip segments in the stacking shaft.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 4, line 1 to page 4, line 17, with the following rewritten paragraph:

The stacking shaft can be arranged in any chosen position, horizontally for instance. More advantageous, however, is an embodiment ~~according to claim 9~~ in which the stacking shaft is substantially vertical, since the depositing of the strip segments is easier if the stacking shaft is vertical. It is advantageous if the stacking shaft is angled slightly backward, so that the strip segments bear against the rear wall and the stack cannot tilt forward. The guidance of the stack of strip segments in the stacking shaft can be improved by a configuration of the stacking device ~~as claimed in claim 10. A~~ in which a guide member disposed between the side walls of the

stacking shaft and extending over the length of the stacking shaft is expediently configured such that the distance of the guide member to the rear wall of the stacking shaft and, where appropriate, its position between the side walls are adjustable.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 4, line 19 to page 4, line 23, with the following rewritten paragraph:

According to ~~claim 11~~ another embodiment, the stacking shaft is preferably open in the upward direction and designed such that a packing container can be slipped over the stack of strip segments in order to grasp the stack and remove it from the stacking device.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 4, line 25 to page 4, line 38, with the following rewritten paragraph:

Particularly advantageous is an embodiment of the stacking device ~~as claimed in claim 12, according to~~ in which the stacking lock is fixed and the stacking shaft is displaceable parallel to the rear wall, at least between the stacking position and an end-loading position. According to ~~claim 13~~ another embodiment, an additional stand-by position can be provided. For the displaceability of the stacking shaft, various design options present themselves. Particularly advantageous is a configuration ~~as claimed~~ in ~~claim 14, according to~~ which the rear wall is configured as a fixed back plate, on which the side walls of the stacking shaft are disposed such that they are displaceable transversely to the stacking direction.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 5, line 1 to page 5, line 7, with the following rewritten paragraph:

According to ~~claim 15~~ a further embodiment, the hold-down devices are expediently configured as laterally extensible and retractable pins. Their mutual spacing allows the press-down devices to reach through between them. The ~~latter~~ press-down devices, according to ~~claim 16~~ another

embodiment, are expediently configured as rakes which can be swung in and out against the stacking shaft.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 6, line 6 to page 6, line 30, with the following rewritten paragraph:

The shaft floor 10 contains a slide 26 assigned to a side wall 4, which slide is transportable on a rail 28 of the side wall 4. The slide 26 can have a dedicated drive, through, in the present example, it is preferably connected to a linear gear 30, formed of a rotary toothed belt 32 driven by a motor 34. Attached to the slide 26 is a guide 36 extending over the maximum width of the stacking shaft, which guide is preferably formed of two guide rods 38. Disposed on the guide rods are supports 40, 42, which are adjustable in terms of their mutual spacing and against which floor parts 44 rest. The floor parts are individually selected according to the width of the stacking shaft 2 and, where appropriate, the other desired characteristics. Advantageously, the floor parts consist of foam rubber, so that they can be compressed. Hence, no change of floor parts is necessary if the width of the stacking shaft is altered. [[A]] The support 42 is additionally designed as a connecting member, which is disposed displaceably on the associated side wall 6 and, moreover, is jointly transported whenever the side wall 6 is laterally displaced along the guide rods 38. Where appropriate, the support 42 can be fixedly connected by fixing screws 46 to the guide rods 38 in order to fix the distance between the side walls 4, 6.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 7, line 9 to page 7, line 30, with the following rewritten paragraph:

In figure 1, the stacking shaft 2 occupies the stacking position in which it cooperates with the fixed stacking lock 17 containing the hold-down devices 18 and the press-down devices 20. The hold-down devices 18 are configured as laterally extensible and retractable pins 60, which are mutually spaced and are driven via a lever gear 62 operated by a control cam 64. The lever gear 62 is pretensioned against the control cam 64 with a pretensioning spring 66. The press-down

devices of 66 [[is]] are pretensioned against the control cam 64. The press-down devices are configured as rakes 68 which can be swung in and out against the stacking shaft 2 and are likewise driven via a lever gear 70 and a control cam 72, against which the lever gear 70 is pretensioned by means of a pretensioning spring 74. In place of the control-cam-operated lever gear for the hold-down devices 18 and press-down devices 20, other drives can also be envisaged, such as, for example, fluid-operated piston/cylinder units, step motors and the like. Assigned to the hold-down devices 18 is a light barrier 76, which is connected to the drive mechanism of the shaft floor 10 by a control device (not detailed).

Please delete the paragraph beginning at page 9, line 1 to page 9, line 39.